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SERMON XXXVI.

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THE BLESSEDNESS OF PERSECUTION FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS' SAKE.

"BLESSED are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you."—MATT. 5: 10-12.

IF we distribute the benedictions into three classes, the first six treat of the saint's experience, the seventh defines his work, and the eighth describes his sufferings. And what the man of God experiences, and what he does, and what he endures, these three make up his total earthly life. Viewed in this light, the disciples of Christ may confidently expect, and in this world, a three-fold benediction of God. For they shall be blessed, says the Saviour, in their experience, and blessed in their work, and if called to suffering, they shall have blessedness also in that.

If we regard these benedictions from another point, the first six describe the Holy Spirit's work in the saint, the seventh portrays the saint's work among sinners, and the eighth represents the work of the wicked among the saints.

In this view, the Spirit's work in the Christian, is sanctification; the Christian's work among sinners, is peacemaking; and the work of the wicked among the good, is persecution. But let my disciples rejoice, says Christ, and let them be exceeding glad, for I will see to it, that they shall have blessing alike in what the Spirit does to sanctify them; in what they do to reclaim the world; and in what the world does to annoy and persecute them.

When the Saviour pronounced his benediction upon the peacemakers, and assured them that they should be called the children of God, he had regard especially, we may suppose, to the awards and verdicts of the final day. He knew perfectly well what they would be called, and how they would be treated while at their work in this world. And to show his disciples that he was not unmindful of their prospects and destinies here, he immediately added a concluding benediction upon the persecuted. As if he had said: "I do indeed assure you of approbation and blessing in the day of judgment, if ye go forth to make peace among men. But I do not forget, nor will I conceal from you the inevitable fact, that just to the extent that you undertake to diffuse a Christian peace among the wicked, will they react and make war upon you. Do not despond, however, or lose courage or purpose on that account. For if, while you offer peace to the world, they make war upon you, that seeming reverse shall be a real triumph, that strange reaction shall bring an added blessing."

We must not understand our Lord as alleging in this benediction that persecution is in itself a blessing. He has in view not so much the external incident, which his disciples would encounter, as the style and tone of that religion which he would have them exercise, and which in its peaceful work provokes and incurs the persecution intended. There are a great many forms of so-called piety which, when exposed to sinners, are as secure from obloquy, and as safe from assault, as they are destitute of righteousness, and empty of power. But the religion which the Saviour approves and enforces, consists of a righteousness which is so well defined, and so active—which, while it attempts to make peace, is at the same time so uncompromising with sin and so aggressive upon evil, that it must either subdue the wicked or excite them, and must evoke a counteracting persecution where it fails to produce a Christian peace. Blessed are the men, says the Saviour, who have a religion which is too active to allow its enemies to slumber, and too aggressive to permit its opposers to be idle.

But this benediction must be guarded on another side. There are minds in every community, and their fellows are found in

every age, to whom persecution, so far from being a misfortune, is something very pleasing and grateful. They desire to be opposed. They are thankful when men speak ill of them. Persecution so distinguishes its victim, martyrdom is such an honor, that they court it, and offer premiums for it, and are never more disappointed, and never more sad, than when the world, seeing them already at the stake, passes cruelly by, and refuses to light the waiting fagots. The student of history will remember that in the early periods of persecution and blood, there was always an army of ignoble martyrs—of men who were so eager to broil or burn, that rather than not be persecuted, they turned persecutors themselves, and assailed and challenged the magistrates—importuning for the privilege of a spectacle, imploring the pleasures of the rack. The student of modern history will note with astonishment, though he may find it impossible to observe with admiration, the numbers and the courage of that legion of self-elected martyrs, who agitate and persecute our uneasy times. In this country especially, where voluntary martyrdom is at once so secure and so satisfying; where, if some misguided lunatic rushes foolishly and alone upon the very point of death, a whole battalion of cowards, skulking safely in their far-off homes, will be sure to raise a complacent and general pean, and claim personal partnership in the sacrifice, which cost blood only to their deluded and abandoned brother—in this day and country it needs to be especially said, that Christ's benediction to the persecuted, has no allusion to the zealots who provoke opposition, or the fanatics who covet insult. The moment a man begins to desire persecution, that moment he forfeits his title to benediction, because he has abandoned the character which his Master would bless. He is no longer a meek, merciful, and pure-spirited benefactor. He has forsaken his office as peacemaker, and set himself up as a signal for assault and a mark for persecution. He shall have his reward, but not in the benedictions or the plaudits of Christ. It is while in the exercise of another, and a far nobler spirit—while engaged in a very different and more Christ-like work—that is, it is only when the Christian incurs persecution in the discharge of his peaceful and soul-saving task—that he has reason to expect the blessing of his Lord.

We must note once more, that the only persecution which has title to this divine beatitude, is persecution for righteousness' sake. A Christian may have received from the Holy Spirit the elements and principles of genuine righteousness, while he has not as yet laid off all that was foolish, and weak, and wicked in his former character. Every time he goes forth to the world, therefore, he may wear this cloak of infirmity covering, and in a sense disgracing his religion. In his soul, there may lie, side by side with his graces, a perverse understanding, a stubborn and unreasonable will, and a morose and hateful temper. Though a Christian, he may

be penurious and conceited, narrow-minded and mean, censorious and severe. He may be a bigot, a fanatic, a recluse. His opinions may be crude and unintelligent, his manners repulsive and uncultured, his temper misanthropic and hateful, his speech harsh, his life shapeless and unhewn. Experience assures us now, that this is just the man to consecrate his infirmities, and canonize his faults, making them axioms for others, as they are idols to himself. His favorite ideas, on things revealed, and especially on things which Revelation has left unilluminated and dark; his opinions, mere whims and crotchets, he will frame into an inexorable creed, making the record of his ignorance a rule for other men's faith. His fiercest passions he will mistake for graces; will mistake, that is, the smoke of a pit for the incense of an altar, and call on the world to revere not his righteousness, but the foibles which obscure his righteousness; not his religion, but the dross which corrupts his religion.

Now the world will probably deride, will possibly persecute such a saint. And if they do, let him not enroll himself too hastily among the army of the martyrs, or expect with too confident assurance the benediction of his Lord. It may be that it is not your righteousness which men mock and censure; and we must carefully remember that it is persecution for righteousness, it is reproach falsely bestowed, to which the Saviour accords his offered blessing. If the wicked pronounce you inconsistent, and you are inconsistent; if they charge you with bigotry, and you are, in fact, a bigot; if they complain of your ill-temper, or cry out against your meanness, or call you unkind, and you are unkind, and are ill-natured, and are mean, censure of this kind does not deserve, does not obtain the blessing of our text.

There are certain good but unsymmetric and ignorant men who are continually mistaking natural rudeness for Christian courage, and self-conceit for a sanctified zeal. To show their boldness against sinners, and their indignation at wrong, these men bring forth their rudest manners, hurling at the impenitent, at unfit times and in provoking ways, the hardest missiles of thought and speech. They seem to imagine that what has been made to them the balm of Gilead, they must make to others the oil of vitriol. To witness their conduct, you would conclude that, in their view, the great object of religion, and the leading task of its disciples, is to torment the wicked before their time. Now if ungodly men, finding themselves pursued and abused by these proud, complacent, and unmannerly zealots, become impatient, and ill-tempered, and disposed to retaliate, the ill manners of an insulted sinner are no worse, surely, than the previous ill manners of an insulting saint; and if either party is persecuted, it is not by righteousness, nor for righteousness. When ye are buffeted for your faults, says an apostle, take it patiently, but do not glory in it; but when you are

hated and maligned for your religion, when for conscience towards God you endure grief, suffering wrongfully, when you encounter scorn or violence for that which is of the nature of righteousness, then you have title to that promise of Christ which says, Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake.

We shall not have a full understanding of this benediction till we consider, fourthly, that in it the Saviour does not name any one form of persecution which, more than another, entitles its victim to the blessing in question. There are countless ways in which ungodly men may abuse the peaceful servants of Christ. And they will select, in every case, such methods as their circumstances and their temper shall make most convenient and effective. In our country, where law restrains force, and liberty is the safeguard of conscience, persecution must surrender her old appliances, and have no more to do with fagot, and fire, and rack. The bitter taunt, the keen insinuation, the scornful look; or if these will not serve, the artful objection, the subtle plea, the deep-laid argument; or if these be too weak, the open assault upon Scripture, and Sabbath, and sacred laws; the public disavowal of all that is divine or holy in government; the public desecration of all that is hallowed in holy time or revered in popular feeling; war, active, resolute, wide-spreading, deadly war—this is ever the last refuge and the crowning act of those who hate and seek to overturn the righteousness of the saints. But over all these various forms of persecution, and all alike, the Captain of our salvation spreads the broad, protecting shield of his benediction, saying to every saint who suffers obloquy or opposition in his cause, whether it be the taunt, the argument, the jeer, the edict, or the stroke of power, Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

The text, as thus expounded, gives us for our theme this morning,

The cruel return which the disciples of Christ receive from the wicked for their endeavors to spread among them the peaceful principles of true religion.

Discoursing upon this topic, I shall draw attention (1) to the fact of persecution; shall inquire (2) into its hidden causes, and shall set forth, in the last place, the true blessedness of those who are persecuted on account of their righteousness.

The Saviour does not say, nor does history declare, that every sinner shall be a persecutor, or every saint a martyr. Persecution and martyrdom are the incidents of intercourse. They depend, therefore, on fit occasions, as well as on latent causes. A wicked man may secretly hate religion and all who endeavor to propagate it. He may have such views and feelings on this subject, that if he were in circumstances to call forth all the enmity that lurks

within him, he would become a Laod or a Herod. And yet for want of an opportunity or a temptation he may pass his life without a single assault upon Christianity or a single sneer at its disciples. In like manner, a Christian may have affections so ardent, and an understanding so clear, a devotion so unflinching, and a will so upright and so steadfast, that, were he put to the trial, he would enter the den of lions with Daniel, or embrace the stake with Polycarp. And yet for want of an occasion to suffer for his Lord he may be obliged to dwell at ease through his entire life, heaven coming to him before he departs to heaven. But instances of this kind are the rare exceptions, and not by any means the ordinary rules of history. For the most part, sinners are persecutors, and the saints are persecuted, live when and where they may. As I have said, the kind of persecution may differ greatly in different countries and circumstances; but there are very few of the wicked who do not, in some way, assail and defame Christianity, and very few of the righteous who do not suffer odium and opposition of some kind on account of their religion.

The text has the sanction of history, therefore, for its unambiguous prophecy that they who will live godly in this world shall suffer persecution.

But why is it so certain that Christ's peace-making disciples shall encounter obloquy, opposition, and loss on account of their religion?

The answer will be found in the conflicting nature of the two systems which these opposing parties embrace and propagate.

Compare righteousness with depravity, or righteous men with sinners, and the two are so exactly antagonistic that if they are brought together in any age, or country, or world, one will become the persecutor, and the other the persecuted. Have the wicked a god? Have they many gods? They are in every case the rivals and the enemies of Him whom the saints worship and serve. Have sinners a creed? It is the exact opposite of those great truths of revelation which the righteous believe and promulgate. Have the ungodly an object which they earnestly and habitually seek? Have they affections which it is their endeavor and purpose continually to gratify? Have they rules and usages which they enact, and promulgate, and obey? Their maxims and customs, their affections and ends, are in exact and uniform contrast with those of the people of God. Darkness is no more the opposite of light, nor error of truth, nor wrong of righteousness, nor Satan of Christ, than are the wicked and their ways of the righteous and theirs. But these two parties and powers are not only opposite; they are (2) irreconcilable. The wicked will not accept what the righteous offer—their God, their Redeemer, their faith, their experience, their righteousness, their heaven. The saints will not receive, again, what the wicked offer—their idols, their lusts, their

customs, their crimes, their exile from God, their coming and certain doom. Neither party will welcome or practice or tolerate what the other offers. Neither will repudiate or cast away what it holds and prizes and worships. Sinners will not abandon their idols, saints will not take leave of their Saviour. Accordingly, the two conflicting parties can never agree and never compromise. If they occupy the same territory, they must separate and stand apart, or antagonism and conflict are inevitable. But the two can not separate, can not stand apart. For we must observe thirdly that every principle of Christianity is, in its very nature, an aggressive principle, and every regenerate man is, on that account, essentially, and without exception, an invader. The saints are in the world to set up and extend the kingdom of peace, and every thing that they receive from their religion is for the purpose of aiding and instigating them in their great characteristic work of assault and conquest. Christianity assumes, as its fundamental postulates, first, that sin and Satan and the wicked are usurpers, having no just claim to the possessions, privileges, and powers which they assume and use. The empire of Satan, in all its parts, and among all its subjects, an iniquitous and cruel usurpation; this is the primal axiom, the first fact in our religion.

The second is, that the Lord Jesus Christ, having inherited the throne of the world, is the only rightful owner and the only legitimate king among these his purchased possessions. Starting from these postulates, Christ and his disciples go forth, day after day, to attack this great system of tyranny and sin; to overthrow its rulers, to break down its fortresses; to disband its forces, to weaken its authority, to annihilate its customs, to subdue its subjects, to set up on its ruins, and, if need be, on the necks also, of its subjugated defenders, that new empire of righteousness which is to be at once the paradise of the future and the peace of the nations. Every thing which the saints have in charge, their God, their Saviour, their Sanctifier, their volume of truth, their book of laws, their visible virtues, their invisible affections, their institutions, their usages, their commonwealths, they are not only to offer to the wicked as privileges, but impose upon them as powers. Such is Christianity; an aggressive religion, a religion which invades and overthrows whatever would oppose its universal spread and sway.

Such, too, are the servants and friends of Christianity. Having in charge the interests and empire of their great Master, they can not stand aloof, and divide the world with the wicked. They have a God; maker, upholder, and sovereign of the world. All other gods are usurpers, whom they must assault, whom they must dethrone, in whose place they must exalt the rightful monarch and establish the only God. They have a revelation of unerring and everlasting truth. This truth is for all times and for all peo-

ple light and law. They must spread it, therefore, spread it over the entire world. To do this, they must drive forth the legions of error, and delusion, and ignorance that have encamped in the minds of the wicked. Breaking up the empire of darkness, the black realm of lies, they must establish in its place the universal reign of truth. They have a code of virtues, of duties to God and duties to men, which they must not only practice themselves, but enforce on others. Thus is Christianity, in its principles and in its subjects, a grand invasion upon the kingdom of darkness. Its object is not to compromise, but to conquer; not to divide the world, but to possess the world; not to propitiate the wicked, but to subdue the wicked.

But we must remark now, in the fourth place, that sinners thus assailed have no other means of resistance or self-defense but the one named in our text. They must either submit to Christian rules, or remain passive while Christianity spreads and triumphs; or if they will oppose, oppose only by persecution. To see the fact and force of this necessity, consider the exact circumstances of the wicked. Suppose they desire to think ill of Christ and his servants. Wicked men want a bad opinion of this religion which they reject. What but false opinions can they summon to their assistance? All just conclusions and all reasonable verdicts pronounce Christianity beneficent and divine. All true opinions declare its claims legitimate, its doctrines true, its precepts just, its triumph blessed. Whoever, therefore, would entertain a bad opinion of Christ's religion, must call to his aid a false opinion. Suppose, again, that the wicked desire to speak against Christianity. Language has nothing but lies and calumnies which she can possibly offer to their uses. If they will speak words of candor, or words of truth, or words of kindness, they can never malign, they can never vilify, the religion which they reject.

Or if the wicked wish to oppose Christianity by their actual treatment of it, it is only by mistreatment that they can accomplish their purpose. Go over the entire catalogue of possible acts, and there is not a single just or reasonable or virtuous deed within the reach or the power of man which he can persuade to oppose the religion of Christ or harm one of its faithful servants. Did you ever reflect upon it, my hearers, that persecution, in one or the other of its odious and cruel forms, is the only possible way in which men can oppose the religion of the Gospel?—that sinners can not think an evil thought against it till they will consent to harbor a false thought; nor feel an unkind emotion till they will take up with one that is unjust and malignant; nor speak an opposing word till they are willing to utter calumny; nor perform an opposing act till they volunteer to commit an outrage? Such is the fact. Sinners have but one possible way of opposing the kingdom of Christ. If they will remain its antagonists, they

must become its persecutors; for what is persecution but the voluntary indulgence of injurious opinions and hateful prejudices, and the voluntary use of calumnious epithets and cruel deeds?

Here, then, are the hidden sources of persecution. They lie in the spirit and circumstances of the wicked. The passions, the intentions, the opinions, of the ungodly are such, that so soon as they and the righteous meet in any age on any field they will oppose, and, in opposing, will persecute Christ and those who follow and resemble Christ.

But, says the Saviour, a religion thus persecuted is not a religion to be condoled, as if it were receiving injury. It is rather a religion to be congratulated for the blessings which it shall obtain in the midst of its trials. How is such a religion blessed? I answer:

1. Purity is one of the certain effects of persecution, and purity is ever an unspeakable blessing to religion.

History informs us that the chief peril to which genuine Christianity is exposed in this world comes not from opposition, but from admixture and consequent adulteration. The wicked of every age desire, and do their utmost to obtain, such concessions on the part of the righteous that there shall be no longer a separation and a conflict, as of two contending parties, but an adjustment and a union, as of one harmonious body. And there is ever a very plausible argument and a very powerful temptation on the part of the friends of Christ to yield to such overtures, and end the wearisome war by a smooth and easy treaty. We have only, say they, to omit or modify some of our peculiar but distasteful doctrines, and repeal certain obnoxious and unessential rules, and relax discipline and let down virtue, and meet the wicked halfway between us and them; and as we descend, they will rise, till, upon some low and common platform, we can together build a broad and capacious Church—a Church in which all offensive distinctions are done away, because the saints have agreed to become as worldly as the wicked, provided the wicked would become as moral as the saints. This cunning admixture of error and truth, this artful framing together of the kingdom of Christ and the empire of Satan, this prudential endeavor to amalgamate righteousness and sin, and yoke the servants of God to the servants of evil—tying, thus, the living to the dead—how uniformly has it corrupted the Church, how inevitably has it paralyzed religion! But persecution resolutely forbids all such compromises. In persecution, each party takes its true position, stands on its own principles, and is kept in its place not only by its subjective necessities, but also by the vigilance and the force of its antagonist. The persecuted saint surrenders every thing but his religion—allows his enemies to take what else they will. But when they lay hand on that, when they

would pluck from him one iota of God's precious truth, or extinguish one of the fruits and graces of his Holy Spirit, or impair or restrain or modify any one point or part of his religion, to such demands he will not submit, to such injuries he will not succumb. "Contribute a single half-penny to the expense of this heathen temple which we are erecting," said the Emperor Julian to the Bishop of Arethusa. "Never," answered the man of God. "Well," said the Emperor, "if that is too much, cast a grain of incense into this uplifted censor." "Never," replied the steadfast and unflinching saint. "Cover the rebel with honey, fetter and expose him to the bees. See what torment will do towards taming the obdurate," cried the infuriate monarch. Day after day the martyr lay on the earth, exposed to incessant assault, and racked with ineffable torture, till, when he had yielded up the last atom of life, he had also preserved every particle of his religion. Such is the unintended service which persecution is made to render to the religion of Christ and its suffering servants. Separating it from all unholy alliances, compelling it to stand apart and preserve its own, can we wonder that He who foresaw the effect of such treatment should have said, "Blessed are the men who are persecuted for righteousness' sake"?

But persecution delivers the saints and their religion from a second evil to which they are greatly exposed in this world. I refer to the perpetual tendency on the part of Christ's disciples to conceal themselves and become indolent and secure in the world. Religion is so unwelcome to the popular tastes, the saint is regarded as such an intruder wherever he goes, and especially if he bears his virtues with him, that good men are often tempted to withdraw and dwell in secret, musing idly in their cloisters, and leaving the world to its follies and its crimes. But when the servants of Christ consent thus to abandon their work, they do as much to damage their piety as they do to dishonor their Master or destroy the wicked. Accordingly, if persecution will but go to all these hiding-places, and discover and challenge and draw forth into open day and instant conflict the secreted servants of Christ—such an assault and such an uprising, instead of harming the saints or hurting their religion, is a heaven-sent benediction, as it is a heaven-sent message. I count it, therefore, a blessing, and not a malison, I look upon it as an omen of good, and not as a harbinger of evil, that in this city, and this land, as we witness with horror and amazement, on this sacred Sabbath, the first Sabbath in our history that has been desecrated in such an open, needless, and shameful way. I regard it, I say, as prophetic of good to the nation, and especially to the Church, that in our land, and in our times, the enemies of Christianity are making such direct, such uncompromising, such united assaults upon the usages, institutions, and laws of our established and national religion. These persecutors are unwittingly

tingly bringing on a state of things, in all the commonwealths, most auspicious to religion, most fatal to its enemies. They are so arranging and plying their attacks in schools, in courts, in legislatures; against the Scriptures, against the moralities, against the Sabbath shield of all that is sacred and palladium of all that is dear in American history, that the friends of religion can not much longer remain withdrawn or idle; and whosoever is the servant of Christ must soon take his place in this impending battle with the wicked. And that will be the happiest day in the annals of our American history when all the servants of God, in all the churches, shall rally to the field to confront the enemy and defend the land. If persecution have come to us on this errand, let her blow her trumpets, and wave her ensigns, and march and menace before our open sanctuaries: we will exult at the discovered omen, understanding the words of our Lord, Blessed are they who are persecuted for righteousness' sake.

3. Persecution compels the righteous to test, and thus enables them to discover the real strength of their religion. The great question concerning citadels and forts and battlements, is not how much can they do, but how much can they withstand. In periods of peace they lie apparently idle and useless. But let invasion approach, let armed navies arrive, let war begin to play upon them. Can they stand in the day of trial? That is the question which determines their real strength and value. So it is with the defenses and powers of the Christian character. The religion of the Gospel while detained on earth is a religion militant; and the only seasons or scenes in which it discovers and uses its full strength are seasons of trial, are scenes of assault and persecution. "I have wild beasts, and will expose you to them," said the proconsul to the venerable Polycarp. "Call them," replied the martyr. "I will tame your proud spirit by fire," added the governor. "You threaten me," answered the martyr, "with a fire that can afflict only the body, and that but for a moment. Meantime you are unmindful of the fire that is never quenched." The governor ordered him to be led forth to the stake. And as they kindled the flames, the voice of the calm worshiper went up through the din of the angry multitude and through the smoke of blazing fagots, opening a highway for the soul that was so soon to follow, "Father of Christ, God of all principalities and of the whole creation, I bless thee that thou hast counted me worthy to receive my portion, in the number of the martyrs, in the cup of Christ." And in that prayer, as in one of God's golden chariots, the soul of the conqueror ascended to glory.

Such are the effects of persecution. Its kindled fires and fierce assaults summon forth the hidden strength of the saints, making the martyrs the mightiest of the men of God. We sometimes despond, and utter our complaint that there are no such

heroes in our days as our fathers and the ancients saw. We forget that till the day of trial comes, heroes are only common men. Were we a little wiser, we should believe that all through these commonwealths, scattered among the peaceful trades and busied among the unambitious walks of an every day life, there are, at this moment, great captains and brave soldiers; captains in disguise, soldiers in secret; souls so full of hidden patriotism and undeveloped power, that were intelligence to thrill along the electric wires to-morrow that the country was invaded, and the republic in peril, warriors would step forth, and Washingtons appear, and the day of need would bring, as it has been wont to bring, the men whom the day demands. There is something sublime in the thought that a great reserved force, an immense deposit of intelligence and valor and strength sleeps in the popular mind—sleeps, but sleeps as a sentinel, waiting the first sound of alarm and the first signal for action.

But what is true of nations in this respect is a thousand-fold more true of the Church of God in respect to the virtues and energies of its indwelling religion. Never yet has an emergency come upon Christ's disciples and found them unprepared and wanting. Persecution has broken upon individuals and churches suddenly and without a harbinger. In one land and another, in one age and another, under one form and another. But look back over the centuries, and tell me where is the recorded instance in which craft or cruelty or power knocked at the gates of the sanctuary, and said, "Let God's martyrs come forth to their fate," and the saints were not ready. My brethren, we often think lightly of the religion of our times; and we have a seeming reason, since so much of the real strength of the saints lies sleeping under an age of peace. But we may not doubt that if persecution, in any one of her ancient and bloody forms, were to return, and challenge and menace the Church, as of old, there would be found in these now peaceful times, and in these seemingly sluggish churches, there would be found among this, my own beloved flock, multitudes who would imitate in an hour the fidelity of Stephen, the courage of Polycarp, the strength of Luther.

Do not doubt it. And if the battle has already begun to be set in array; if God is determined to let his enemies have their will, and storm the citadel of our Christianity till its servants and defenders awake and put on their strength, let us not fear. Persecution, come in what forms it may, is but the gale sent of God to shake the mountain oak, by which its giant arms are made the more mighty, and its expanded roots the more tenacious, till, from a sapling among the trees, it comes to be the monarch of the mountains, the victor of the elements, the sentinel of the world.

SERMON XXXVII.

BY REV. E. H. GILLETT,

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STRENGTH AGAINST TEMPTATION.*

"Be strong in the Lord."—Eph. 6 : 10.

THERE has been no period since these words were first written when they were more appropriate or emphatic than they are now, and every young man especially should give heed to them.

There is abroad in the world in these times a strength of enterprise and energy which, in some of its aspects, is hopeful, and in others appalling. The powers of art and commerce, of the pen and press, of vice and passion, have reached among us an unprecedented, and, in some respects, startling development. Every day brings into action some new energy of popular opinion, feeling, and will. We have reason to tremble for the result if these forces are left to rush headlong, if we can not tame and subdue them into subserviency to the cause of truth.

In this emergency, our eyes are directed toward the Christian young men of our land, and we feel an inexpressible anxiety that they should understand and feel the responsibilities of their position. For their own sake, and for the sake of Christ's kingdom in the world, we want them to apprehend what the Church of Christ may justly claim at their hands. On the eve of one of the most eventful of England's naval conflicts, Nelson hung aloft from the mast-head that inspiring admonition, which was read with a thrill of heroic feeling by his fleet: "England expects every man to do his duty." Not less startling and inspiring, as addressed to the young men of our land, should be the stirring admonition that comes to us from a greater leader, and at a crisis more momentous, Be strong in the Lord.

We have here presented to us two branches of a common theme—Be strong—Be strong in the Lord; or,

I. The strength required.

II. Its source.

* Preached before the Young Men's Christian Association of Harlem, Sunday evening, November 27, 1859.

I. As to the strength required, it is scarcely necessary to remark in the first place, that

1. It is not primarily physical strength. The time was when this was a prime element in the estimate of a man, nor can we doubt that it is undervalued now. It is true that we have brought the powers of nature so far under our control that we are at liberty to think far less than we once did of brawny muscles. Steam forces iron fingers to turn our cranks, and battles for us against wind and tide. The Prussian monarch's seven-foot grenadiers would be only a more splendid target for parks of modern artillery. A Nimrod now, would be measured by his brains rather than his club.

But the very power of genius may have led us to regard too little the strength and efficiency of a sound and healthy frame. We push the mind to a premature development, and victimize the body by the means. Our hot-bed processes of education turn out overstocked intellects on pigmy stalks. Learning to cipher, we forget the arithmetic of health. Learning to reason, we overlook the rigid logic of nature's laws; and many a man that might have served God in his day and generation with some efficiency, if possessed of a sound frame, is crippled of his manhood, and the crazy hulk of his body gives way under the strain of his intellectual machinery.

The care of health is therefore a duty. If the soul did not suffer by excessive taskwork, untimely hours, dissipation, and sensual indulgence, the body groaning under the burden would protest against such abuse. We want a sound body for a sound mind to work in; and yet there are classes of men with undermined constitutions and dyspeptic bodies whom it would be a kind of mockery to bid be strong in any sense.

2. Neither does the direction of the text apply specifically to intellectual strength. This is not without its importance, although without moral aims it is a blind giant, and with perverted aims it is a willful giant. Intellectual strength is dependent in part on original endowment, and in part on studious acquisition. Some are weak to begin with, and, in a grove of oaks, would never be anything but feeble alders. Yet discipline and study may enlarge their resources and redeem them from contempt; while others, in the lack of high educational privilege, may by diligence obtain a rank of real intellectual strength. They may adopt methods that shall tend to brace and invigorate rather than enervate their intellectual powers. They may grasp real knowledge instead of diluting their mental energies with sickly sentimentalities and worthless fiction. They may grapple with real thought instead of feeding on fancies or dallying with dreams.

And this is duty. Strength of mind alone is but an equivocal good, but in the possession of a good man, it is a most desirable element of strength. It gives breadth to his views, firmness to

his grasp of thought, shape and method to his efforts, and wisdom to his plans. It makes him more of a man. A candlestick does not give much light of itself, however you burnish it to a silver lustre, but it is a capital thing to set a candle in. And so a cultivated mind is just God's candlestick to set forth the light of his grace and truth, and so commend it to the world.

By all means, then, strengthen the intellect. Enrich the mind with sound knowledge. Accustom it to effort. Be at home in the works of nature and of Providence, of human art and genius, as far as you consistently can. Bring not your powers halt and maimed to the service of God, when you can present them sound and strong.

3. But far more important than this is moral strength. Here, too, something depends upon original endowment. There are some whose moral natures seem made of wax. Most unfortunately there is nothing in them like flint to strike fire from. The devil shapes them at will, as a woman kneads her dough. A strong temptation bears them away, as a whirlwind does the down of a thistle. They are as impressible as a sponge, and the impression is as lasting. Pour truth into them till they are saturated, and one good squeeze of a strong wicked mind will wring them dry in a moment. They take the moral hue of their company. They are easy to weep, easy to laugh, but in either case it is weakness running over or leaking out.

Yet sometimes where we witness this, it is not all due to nature. It would be a libel upon her to say so. There are youth who grow, but grow weak. Feeble to begin with, their ripe manhood is but confirmed decrepitude. The process of their education is not a strange one—not unusual. It is only too frequent. They allow themselves to be tossed on the waves of temptation till buffeted into submission. They drift then with the current. They have no heart, scarcely a wish, to struggle against it. Thus they are the sport of passion or accident. The only lesson they seem to have learned thoroughly, is to despair of being better. They have leaned upon others until they have not confidence to believe that they can stand on their own feet.

This is the case with many a victim of vice and passion. He is the merest slave. If the drunkard's cup is in his way, he must drink. If old companions encircle him, he must swear the old oaths and rattle the dice again. He is under their power, almost as the steel-filings are under the power of the magnet. Temptation has so riddled his nature with arrows that only a shadowy outline is left to offer even the show of resistance.

Yet this is the sure result toward which sinful indulgence always tends. Yielding to the lures of pleasure, a man becomes every day morally weaker. The original manhood of his nature is eaten out as by a dry rot. There seems nothing left but the touchwood of hell, fuel for the final burning.

Nature is almost wanting in types of such weakness. They are so few and scant it looks as if she was ashamed to furnish them. Look at her, and you see her oaks, and rivers, and mountains, all strong in unconscious might. Even her reeds and rushes are too stable to be fitting types of such weakness. We must wait for them to decay, and when at last withered by frosts, piled up by freshets that have borne them off and left them dry and barren on the beach, they invite only contempt, you may see how the weeds and weakness of the soul must appear by the side of God's cedars.

Now what we want is something nearly the reverse of this. We know well what the real work and victory of life require. There are strong frames and brawny shoulders to tunnel our mountains and lay our railroad tracks. There are strong intellects to follow up the paths of invention, to grapple with the problems of art and science, to shape the material destiny of nations, to stretch the network of commercial enterprise around the globe. But to contend with sin in the heart and in the world, to meet it in its most imposing or in its most artful guise, to build in troublous times the walls of God's spiritual temple, to stand by the truth evermore to the end, to project and carry forward the plans of Christian charity for the subjection of every heart to the allegiance of Christ—all this requires a strength which is no outgrowth of our fallen nature, a strength as distinct from intellectual as that is from physical, a strength which neither the warlike genius of Napoleon, too weak to curb his own ambition, nor the talent of the great Bacon, too weak to withstand a bribe, could bestow.

Yet here we must distinguish between mere strength of character and will and strength of religious principle. They should be both harmoniously combined, and yet the first presenting itself in forms which we can not but admire, is too often found without the solid supports of a vital faith. It is in our nature to admire strength and almost idolize it. The strong man wins applause. Power, the power of muscle, power of endurance, the power of untiring energy, sometimes impress us with awe. We associate with it the idea of some sort of supremacy.

And still more so in the case of intellectual strength. It charms us. It captivates us. It bears us off with it, as Samson bore off with him the gates of Gaza. Under the spell of a great thought, we wear its fetters or soar upon its wings. He that utters it is our master for the time being. We bow to his supremacy, even under the protest of our criticism.

And so there is a moral greatness, not necessarily religious, which we admire, for it is strong. It may be a heathen greatness, it may be a Pagan strength, but it rests upon the basis of strong character, and the moral element of it forces our applause. There was strength, when Socrates scorned to escape from prison, and

chose rather to drink the fatal hemlock. There was strength, when Regulus, a prisoner and hostage, sent by the Carthaginians to persuade the Romans to peace, advised them, though he knew it would cost his life, still to fight on. There was strength, when Newton saw the papers which contained the results of eight years' study consumed by a trifling accident, calmly sat down to the task of replacing them. There was strength, when Washington, in the gloomiest hour of the Revolutionary conflict, refused to despond, and projected his decisive victory. There was strength, when Joseph Reed, of Revolutionary memory, approached by bribes of British gold, nobly replied: "I am poor, very poor, but poor as I am, the King of Great Britain is not rich enough to buy me."

But how much more noble and enviable than this is the strength of religious principle, strength in God. It is not strong necessarily in muscle, in intellect, in strategy; but it is strong in resistance to moral assault, to temptations that, in winning guise and in more than carnal strength, would draw the soul to perdition. The real battle of life is with Satan and his arts and followers, and the real hero is he who wins in this conflict. Strength here is real strength—it is the strength of angels, the strength of God. Its resources are from above. It looks to the things that are unseen and eternal, and from these draws its inspiration. It lays hold upon the arm of Jehovah. It plants itself upon the rock of ages, and then it defies the world. Assaulted by bribes, it scorns them. Threatened by power, it despises its terrors. Lured by honors, it tramples them under foot. Charmed by pleasures, it stops its ear to their syren song. There is a Nero. It will surrender him a head, if he demands it, but not a conscience. There is a Belshazzar, with his chains of gold and political promotion. It pronounces on his guilt a "Mene, mene, tekel, upharsin." There is a Festus, with his sneer at fanatics; but in the calm dignity of its reply it strips him of the assumption of superior reason and unmasks a royal fool. There is the great tempter himself, with all the kingdoms of the world, but it says to him: "Get thee behind me, Satan."

It meets hardship, but it says, my Master endured it and so will I. It is threatened with a loss of friendship, loss of business, loss of position, but it says, I can starve, but not lie. I can bear to be abandoned of men, but not of God. It is assaulted by the arts of beauty and fashionable sin, but it stands siege like a Gibraltar. Ridicule would sting it, but with calm contempt it crushes that devil's wasp.

The record of Scripture gives us noble examples of strength to teach and to inspire us. Its heroes of faith were strong—strong in the Lord. There was strength, when Abraham mastered the strong feelings of a father and, at God's command, bound his own son for the altar. There was strength, when Moses, presumptive heir, perhaps, to the crown of Egypt, chose rather to suffer affliction

tion with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season. There was strength when the young men in Babylon chose to be thrown into the king's furnace rather than bow to his idol. There was strength, when John the Baptist, at the cost of his head, dared to rebuke the wickedness of Herod. There was strength, when, in the face of the Jewish Sanhedrim, the Apostles were bold to say: "Whether it be right in the sight of God to obey man rather than God, judge ye." There was strength, when Paul bore up under his protracted imprisonment for years, and finally submitted to death sooner than yield his convictions of faith in Christ.

In all these examples we learn what that strength is which is required of us. It is strength to resist and vanquish temptation, the temptation that would lead one to violate conscience, indulge appetite or passion, conform to the world, or disobey God. It is strength to meet influences, so subtle and mighty that the hero of a hundred battles has fallen before them; so mighty as to appall those whom the roar of cannon or the flash of glittering steel could not dismay.

See Samson with his head in Delilah's lap. See Alexander with conquered world beneath his feet, the victim of a drunkard's appetite, and dying in opening manhood of a drunken debauch. See Cæsar, strong to conquer nations, but too weak to curb his own ambition. See the learned Erasmus, winning the homage and flattery of all the crowned heads of Europe, but too weak to master his own vanity. See Napoleon, at the height of his power, dictating the destiny of kingdoms, but not strong enough to resist the temptations that have covered his name with the stains of murder and of mean revenge.

How contemptible all these in their high distinctions and honors by the side of God's true heroes, many of them as humble as the poor African or the Dairyman's Daughter, strong in faith. However strong the first were in character, strong in will, strong in resolute energy, they were no match for that simple loyalty to conscience and to God, which, without a single human eye to look applause, or a single human hand to plait a crown, has endured in calm silence and patient suffering what would have crushed the courage and energy and pride of all worldly resolve.

Let us thank God that the history of his Church, since the Apostolic period, as well as then, abounds in lessons of the strength we need to possess. The martyrs were strong when chains and dungeons could not crush the constancy of their spirits, and when their song of triumph rose loud and clear above the crackling of the flames. Luther was strong when he declared, despite the power of the mightiest monarch of the globe, that he would keep his appointment at the Diet of Worms, though there were as many devils there as there were tiles on the roofs of the houses. Bunyan was strong when he said, that sooner than make a shambles of

his conscience and stop preaching the Gospel at the command of king or prelate he would lie in prison, if God spared frail life so long, till the moss should grow upon his eyebrows. Howard was strong, when traversing Europe on his errand of mercy to the inmates of its loathsome prisons, all the splendor of temples, and palaces, and galleries of art could not lure him to loiter a moment in mere curious gaze. The missionary Carey was strong when executing the cherished purpose indicated by his memorable words to Andrew Fuller: "I am going down into the death-pit of heathenism; do you keep hold of the ropes." Henry Martyn was strong, despite his feeble frame that soon sank under its task, when he rose above the pride of scholarship and the temptations of literary distinction, and solemnly gave up his life to toil for benighted India.

And so in lowlier spheres they are strong, who, to minister to want and suffering, to preach the Gospel, to recover the erring, undergo hardship that few applaud, or venture on self-denial for which the world has little else than scorn. They are strong, who, with steady purpose, steer their way through the Scylla and Charybdis of business and of pleasure. They are strong, who, in the world, have grace to live above it, and who listen unmoved to the voice of the charmer, charm he never so wisely, who master their own appetites and passions, and carry with them through all the strifes of the world a peaceful conscience, through all its pollutions a stainless character, through all its allurements an unshaken loyalty to duty. They are strong, who can spurn the bribes of political or social eminence in devotion to deeds of charity and kindness, and who can welcome self-sacrifice in the cause of the Master they serve.

Such is the strength which the circumstances of our life and of our age require. We want it for the young man himself, moving through scenes of temptation, where every lurking-place hides an ambush, where many an associate acts as a devil's decoy, where vice lures him in flower-strewn paths toward her dismal den, where wealth holds out bribes to purchase his integrity, where the world itself seems at times as it were Satan's great pawnbroker's shop, in which every bale of goods and every scrap of the over-piled rubbish had some story to tell of a bartered conscience.

We need it especially in these times, when sin is strong in the high places of power, when the contest is with principalities and powers, and the rulers of the world, and spiritual wickedness in high places, when the faithful men are comparatively like Gideon's little band, when the giant energies of enterprise, and commerce, and art, are like the leviathan that you can not bind in the furrow, when the impetuosity of national vigor threatens to be the impetuosity of sin, and when the world itself moves on its own express train to a grand smash-up, unless engineered by a moral and religious principle that too rarely grasps the throttle or the breaks.

II. But whence is this strength to come? Be strong in the Lord, is the reply. There is no other strength that will meet the demands of the occasion. There is strength of intellect, but without the moral or religious element, it is steam without a rudder or a safety-valve. There is strength of will, but taken by itself, it is, to human view, a kind of omnipotent caprice, the stubbornness of a mule, or the blind fury of a despot. There is strength of character, but the character may be wrong, and then you have only the cast-iron fixedness of matured depravity. There is moral strength, but after all, morality without religion is like the ribs without the backbone. It has no proper reliable basis, no fixed support.

The strength that alone is stronger than the world, is strength from above, strength in the Lord. Many a time, without this, all other energy has shown itself to be pitifully weak. It is a blind Samson grinding in its prison-house. It is a dethroned king, caged as Bajazet was, as a madman, and gnawing upon the bars of its cage. If it wrestles and toils, it is only to sink deeper in the mire. Unconsciously it forges its own fetters. It groans in anguish over its fallen state. Vice or a bad ambition have bound it to some hopeless task, like the galley-slave to the oar. It fights to fall and fall again. It is crushed under the weight of its own superincumbent iniquity, yet restless there as the fabled Enceladus under *Ætna*. Temptation masters it. If it breaks loose in revolutions, insurrections, mobs, and riots, it is only an uncaged tiger. We tremble before its rude muscle and its bloody claws.

But it is not so with the strength of faith, the strength that resists temptation and overcomes the world. It is sometimes allied with strong character, and becomes more effective. It is sometimes associated with strong will, but it tames that will to become its dutiful but firm executive. It sometimes is grafted upon a nature of more than ordinary moral sensibility, and then it shoots forth magnificent as a cedar of Lebanon.

But the source and support of it ever are in God. It comes by faith—a faith that takes hold upon the unseen, that communes with heaven, that leans upon the eternal promises, that endures as seeing Him who is invisible. You find it where this faith is, not where it is not. It is he who looks to an eternal crown, who can afford to spurn the poor rewards of earth's ambitions, he who feels that God's eye is on him, who cares not for the averted looks or the scrutinizing glance of men, he that has tasted the joys of God's spiritual Eden, who despises the withering blooms and pleasures that form the objects of the world's idolatry, he that loves holiness for its own sake, that detects the ugliness of vice through all its maskings, he that has the peace of God in his own soul, that asks for his repose no downy pillows of earthly pomp.

Where is the secret of his strength? Follow him to the cross, where he goes to gaze and meditate—follow him to the place of solitary communing with God in prayer, and you shall see. He

went there overburdened, consciously weak. He comes back strong, a spiritual giant. He had been tossed on the waves of care and worldly anxiety, and he felt ready to sink. But now he has cried out, like Peter, on the sea, "Lord, save, or I perish," and lo! you see him walking calmly on the very crests of the billows, strong in the strength of Him whom the winds and the storm obey.

And now send him out into the world. He feels that God is with him, that God dwells in him and he in God. Pour out upon him, ye powers of darkness, your fiercest temptations. Assault him now with all your hellish arts. See, he quails not. You can make no impression. The shield of faith quenches all the fiery darts of the devil. He stands his ground. Tell him there is a fortune for a lie. He will show you that the lie would leave its leprosy behind it to taint the fortune. Tell him of the pleasures of gay society and of the mazy dance. He calmly looks upward, exclaiming, There they sing the new song. Vex him with taunts, and reproaches, and ridicule, and studied contempt; how firmly he replies, with his eye on Calvary, I will not shrink to tread the path my Master trod.

Surely the strength of a true life is in God and from God. We read the Bible, not Cicero, not Seneca, to learn its secret. We find that the lowly penitent for sin, he that has been taught of God to loathe it, is mightiest to resist it. We find that he who just now exclaimed, "I am a worm and no man," prays, and lo! he soars aloft on eagle wings. We find him who daily walks with God, growing in grace and in holy strength, till, in the ripeness of mature years, he stands high above the world, like the mountain-top still lit with sunset glory, when the valleys are already steeped in night.

Oh! then be strong in the Lord and in the power of his might. You have a fearful conflict to wage. Your own soul is a battle-field. Satan, with his hosts of darkness, is struggling there for the mastery. Foes innumerable surround you at every step. In the street, in the shop, in your own dwelling, there are dark whisperings of the tempter essaying to gain some advantage. Plant firm the banner of your King on the contested ground, and gird yourself to defend it with the whole panoply of God.

Do your duty in the world. Be not afraid to rebuke sin—to be known as one who keeps a conscience not to let. Be faithful to every good cause and every good work. Have an ear open to the wants of a dying world, to the claims of a wrestling church.

And to this end seek strength, strength in God. Some of you have learned its secret. Make it yours. Possess it; hold it fast; and however desperate the strife may be, you shall at last shout as a conqueror: "Blessed be God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

SERMON XXXVI.

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AMERICAN CHRISTIAN PATRIOTISM.*

"Oh! praise the Lord, all ye nations: praise him, all ye people. For his merciful kindness is great toward us: and the truth of the Lord endureth forever. Praise ye the Lord."—PSALM 117.

MEN sin in crowds, but each individual in those crowds must stand alone for final judgment. Nations are now triumphant, and now overthrown, but, be the event one or the other, it is all transacted here—of the earth, all earthy. Eternity knows nothing; in its judgments of nations, its doom is of the individuals simply that make up nations. And why? Because individual actions, of which each actor has control, make up, in their aggregate, the action of the nation to which those individuals belong. The responsibility is thus proportioned to the opportunity, and the means conferred, for regulating individual conduct. This is the equitable rule in dispensing the judgments of eternity. But there are judgments upon earth for national wrong-doing; and, therefore, the member of earthly society has a responsibility to meet here, as well as a final, personal doom, to meet hereafter. His individual action as a citizen here, may imperil his comfort on earth; while, in the same act, his conduct as a man, a rational creature, accountable to God, may impart happiness hereafter. As a member of society, man has no right to "follow a multitude to do evil." Nor is his responsibility, as a man, any the less, simply because he acts in concert with that multitude; it can not be distributed among them! It may seem to be less to men, because of the difficulty they find in attributing to each individual his exact share in the production of the general result of combined action; but it is not so to God, whose omniscience encounters no such difficulty. Now, it is precisely this difficulty which makes men either less vigilant over their actions as members of the body politic and social, or, which is quite as bad, indifferent to the performance of any actions as citizens, at all. Hence it results that in a government where suffrage is universal, the work of the state is apt to be managed by those who trouble themselves very little with the difficulty we

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have mentioned, because they feel no responsibilities either social or individual. This state of things, however, (if past history may be believed,) is endurable for a time only. It passes through its regular stages of anarchy, civil war, despotism, and finally terminates in a settled government of some kind, which, if it restricts human freedom, (as it is apt to do,) at least possesses vigorous strength, and affords, at least, protection to the well-disposed. This is the usual history of republics. But when our fathers founded this republic, knowing, as they well did, the lesson furnished by an experience of the past, they were not ignorant that a new element was incorporated into their organization which had been wanting in the past—an element potent enough, if allowed to operate, to afford some security against a repetition of the sad routine of past failures in republics, by enlisting the deepest and strongest of man's feelings, even the religious sympathies of his nature—his conscience and sense of duty to God—on the side of the government. That element was Christianity. They were making a republic for men who came of Christian parentage, and had been taught the great truths of Christ's religion. Whether this new element will afford the safeguard which they hoped for in it, is a problem yet to be solved; and it is a problem simply, because, as I just remarked, to afford security it must be allowed to operate. If it be thus allowed, there is no doubt of its sufficiency. And this train of thought brings us inevitably to this conclusion—that of all the nations in Christendom there is none which needs Christianity, as a silent governmental element, as much as the United States does; and further, that there is not one which adopted a wiser measure to secure that aid, than was shown by our fathers, in refusing to fetter men's consciences, and in leaving each man free to adopt that form of Christianity most in accordance with his own views of duty. Nothing short of a deep sense of obligation to God, recognized by the mass of the people, and lying behind all our municipal regulations, giving to them the moral support which human law must have in its administration, can possibly sustain in perpetuity political institutions like our. If you will build on the virtue of the people as a foundation, you must, of course, make your foundation strong by enlisting some agency to make the people virtuous; for then only are they competent to works of self-government, and where will you find this agency but in Christianity?

The custom of our country has appropriated the exercises of the pulpit on this day more particularly to a consideration of our duties as Christian citizens. Let my theme of to-day then be American Patriotism—I mean the genuine patriotism of an intelligent Christian man.

I. What does the Christian patriot of this country owe to the world? Every nation has its own concurrence of providential

events which indicate its peculiar duties. What then is our position and power as a people, and what may be our influence on the world without our borders? With a rapidity so marvelous that to all but the blind it indicates the special hand of Providence, we have grown within less than a century, from a few poor colonies, struggling for life on our Atlantic coast, into a mighty nation, stretching, in our territory, from the region of Arctic cold down to the clime of tropical airs and ever-verdant vegetation—and comprehending in our lateral grasp a broad continent, washed on its opposite coasts by the waves of two great oceans. Within this wide expanse, with every variety of climate and of soil, with far more territory than we have yet population to occupy, with untold and almost incredible mineral wealth beneath the surface of the earth, and a profusion of God's richest vegetable bounties upon it; with an intermediate position between Europe and Asia, indicating a rapid approximation to the time when our continent must become a middle ground in the great lines of transit for the commerce of a world, what more of natural advantages could heaven bestow? But this is not all; as if to facilitate our efforts in subduing and utilizing this immense domain for God's glory and man's happiness, mark, again, how our heavenly Father has timed the period of our gigantic though infant growth. It is since we came into birth as a nation that the three great modern elements of human progress have been developed. Steam has become our steed, and lightning our messenger, and gold the magician that has set them to work. Since the coming of our blessed Saviour, there has been, in all history, no century as important to man in its mighty results, past and prospective, as the present. The mariner's compass, the revival of learning, the invention of gunpowder, the discovery of America, the reformation of religion, were all great events—all to the philosophic eye of thoughtful man, footprints in the stately steppings of Jehovah as he passed on to the accomplishment of his great but unseen purposes, in fulfilling the predetermined destinies of this world which he has made. But the future chronicler of past events, as he looks back on the unrolled scroll of time, will nevertheless write down the times in which we live as part of the "marvelous century" in man's story.

Nor yet is this all. Unlike the elder nations of Christendom, we emerged not into civilization from a previous state of barbarism. We grope not in the dark caverns of antiquity to find in the dying legends of some silly tradition, the origin of our national existence. Our history is all written in authentic records; and our starting point among the nations of the earth is one which, from the beginning placed us on a line with the highest civilization of Europe. Hence our political institutions, embodying, as they do, so much of freedom. We had the benefit of that which had passed the ordeal of actual experiment in other lands. We were not obliged

to grope in the dark, and feel our way, as it were, to great elemental principles. And now what is the natural and fair inference from facts like these? Is it not that God meant our national existence and happy condition to exercise a salutary influence upon the world? Nations, like individuals, must not live unto themselves only. And if this be so, is not our obligation plain, as one of the great family of nations? Shall we take all we can get from them, unscrupulous as to the means we employ, and give them back in return nothing? Shall we, with a national selfishness which would justly degrade us in the eyes of Christendom, practice the high-handed robbery which the strength alone of a common felon enables him to perpetrate over a weak and therefore unresisting victim? Shall the nation become a common thief, and pirate-like prey, wherever it can with impunity, on those who can not defend themselves from our dishonorable larcenies? Was it for this, think you, God made our nation what it is?

II. But again, there is another very plain duty which, I think, we owe to the world, and, as I will show you presently, not to the world only, but to the honored memory of our buried fathers, as well as to the present of ourselves and the future of our children. Ours is a land of plenty, and our institutions afford all the political freedom a reasonable man can desire. The fame of our country, in these respects at least, has gone out into all lands in Christendom. The over-worked serf and the ill-paid artisan of another hemisphere have heard the wonderful story of a country far distant over the waves, where such as they are free and comfortable. They look upon their wives and little ones, and sundering all ties of early associations and home-born affections, they gather around them the group they love, and are soon tossing on the billows, heading their course to this El Dorado of their anxious and sanguine hopes. And what has made it an El Dorado? for such, in truth, it is to the honest and industrious emigrant from other lands. Its physical abundance, its political freedom, and its national strength—these are the bright stars which have lured these hopeful wanderers over the sea; these are the particulars which fit our country to be a home for men in other lands less happy than we are. And in the timely discovery of America, and the miraculously rapid growth of our nation, God, in his good providence, meant, among other purposes, as I religiously believe, to provide just such a home for just these people.

Of these three particulars, the first, physical abundance, is likely to continue; for that is God's gift, and man may abuse, but can not destroy it. The other two, however, political freedom and national strength, are confided to man, and he may destroy them. He may trample under foot the charter which his fathers wisely framed to secure the first, or by foul corruption may destroy its

proper exercise; and he may lay the last in ruins, by sundering rudely the bonds of union which his fathers wrought, to link it together forever, in the might of an invincible strength. This he may do, and in doing destroy the Republic, and rob the world of a safe refuge from tyrannous oppression. And alas! do not the signs of the times give but too much reason to fear that this is precisely what some are seeking to do? Are there, for instance, none who openly condemn the Constitution of their country—none who, by the exercise of a corruption that scarcely has shame enough to keep itself out of sight, pervert it from its plain declarations and legitimate interpretation? Are there none who have been willing and ready to convert executive powers into judicial, and legislative into executive? And how speak some men now of that Union, of which our fathers (taught by revolutionary experience) thought so much? They had purchased it for their children with their blood; and that blood had flowed from Northern and Southern hearts alike; it made one common pool upon the battle-field; they knew that upon union alone depended a strong, proud, national existence. Do all their sons adhere to this opinion of their fathers, or do they trample on their memories, and despise their wisdom? Let facts answer. What means the angry and insulting language of portions of the Press both North and South toward each other? Why do flippant sneers and taunting insinuations, and insidious affectations of candor, and false assertions, and vulgar vituperation, form so much of the editorial staple of certain prints? Is it thought to show skill of fence in intellectual gladiatorship? Whether it be quite as clever writing as its authors suppose, may perhaps admit of doubt; but grant that it is, the sober American, who has no personal vanity of authorship involved, may well ask, whether it is either patriotic or wise, thus to furnish fuel to the flame of mutual exasperation already burning, alas! too brightly; or to sacrifice the interests and happiness of our country to the gratification of some author's wish to attain celebrity as the writer of insulting sneers and trenchant irony. Our country is surely worth more to us than the gratification of the personal vanity of any man, and while it is cheerfully conceded that the Press should be free, and may often furnish information and instruction to the public mind, yet it would be hard to show any lawful power it possesses to assume over it dictation or control. The mode of saying may be often more offensive than that which is said; and there is a mode which does not conduce to Union, because its tendency is to destroy fraternal feeling. If any American citizen wishes to be without a country that can command the respect of the civilized world, let him contribute his aid to dissolve the Union of these United States. In the fulfillment of his unpatriotic purpose, he will find his punishment, for he will have ruined himself. He will be crushed and bruised under the edifice he has assisted to undermine.

III. But it is time to pass on to the consideration of what this country owes to itself, as well as to the world at large. Our country is exempted (at least for the present) from the intestine convulsions of revolution—how long it may be before opposing hosts may be marshaled on the field of carnage depends, under God, on the calmness, the courage, the prudence, and the patriotism of the wise, the thoughtful, and the good men of all parties of the Union, who love their country better than they do any party, and who have the sense to appreciate its value to the world and to themselves. Of the men who, in their moral and numerical strength, are able with perfect ease, if united for that purpose, to rebuke with a voice of thunder—nay, to rush into hopeless extinction—the ultraism of all parts of our land, whether North or South, East or West, (for there is ultraism in all,) and to say we will have no more of this wretched insanity of a few thousands, assuming to itself the wisdom and the right to overthrow the government and abolish the Union, which our fathers shed their blood to make, and under which so many millions of us are quite sure we can live peacefully, prosperously, and happily. We are Americans, and patriotic enough to lay for the time our minor and temporary differences of local politics on the altar of our country, and there sacrifice them without a second thought. Give us but honest and capable men to fill our offices, we care not from what party they come, or by what names they may have been called, and let us sweep corruption and disloyalty from the land, now and forever. The majority in our country, I am persuaded, have this feeling; let them be but as active in its exhibition as the miserable demagogues, and office-seekers, and political profligates are in their mischievous and dirty work, and in less than a twelvemonth the land would be free from these offensive vermin, as loathsome, ay, and as contemptible in their individuality, as were the insects of the third plague of Egypt. But, looking at our condition as it is, one of peace, I proceed to illustrate the duty we owe to ourselves, in the remark that we are not altogether unaffected by the disturbances of another hemisphere. I speak not now of the derangement of our business relations with the world without, nor yet do I allude to the danger of our departure from a wise neutrality in the conflicts of other and distant nations; but I mean to speak of one consequence of the troubled state of Europe, with which the providence of God does call on us to deal, whether we wish it or not. The population of Europe, as I have already intimated, has come, and probably will continue to come by hundreds of thousands; and whether it be agreeable to us or otherwise, we have to deal with them. We must “Americanize” them, or submit to have them revolutionize us and our institutions. There can be no middle ground in this matter. We may as well look the fact in the face, and understand it exactly as it is. It will not be

pretended that of the vast numbers that come, many can understand our political institutions or the theory of our government. Thousands of them, as we know, can not even speak our language. Some of them, who have long groaned in Europe under a degrading serfdom, construe their newly acquired liberty into a license to trample upon all law and do what they will. Again, others of them who can read our language but imperfectly, become at once dogmatical expounders of our political charters, and, with oracular gravity inform us that they know better than our fathers did what our Constitution means, nay, what true liberty is. We are tempted to smile at the cool impudence of this assertion, and ask when and from whom they were to learn the lessons of liberty? From what region do they come? From that country which furnished, in the ancestors of these very men, the mercenary hireling soldiery whom our fathers met and conquered on the battlefields of the War of Independence. What did any Hessian of those bloody times know of rational liberty? Nay, what did any principality in all Germany know? And yet some of these are the men who clamor loudest about our institutions, and our sacred, inalienable rights as American citizens. Our institutions! our rights! Why, if their fathers could have performed what they were hired to do, in the work of slaughter, their sons would not be here to-day to howl out party slang, in broken English, about their rights and privileges; we owe it to our own fathers, not to theirs, that there are in existence such things as an American Republic and American citizens.

Well, yet again there is another class among them quite guiltless of ability to utter one word of our language, or perchance to read one word of any other, who have merely transferred to our soil all the ignorance, all the prejudices, and all the practices which belonged to them at home; and who, in an occasional outbreak, riot or murder, exhibit their profound and intelligent appreciation of the value of free institutions. Here, then, is the evil, and I think that every honest man here will admit that it is not exaggerated. With this, then, (whether we wish it or not,) we are perforce required to deal, if indeed we are not prepared to succumb to it.

What, then, is the remedy for it? And this brings us to the question of *duty*. What does the American patriot owe to his country and to himself in this matter? There are but two remedies, and one of these, of which I shall speak first, is but partial only, and guards against the future without providing for the past. This remedy is an absolute exclusion of refugees from our shores. But what man of humanity or political sagacity would think of applying this? We have a broad territory, where honest industry is rewarded with abundance, large enough and rich enough to afford a comfortable asylum for all the poor or the op-

pressed who choose to come. Many, too, of those who would seek it are excellent and worthy; and, in one way or other, many have doubtless been the victims of a hard and tyrannous oppression. At all events, they are men and brethren of our common humanity. I can not, therefore, find it in my heart to say aught else than "Let them come and find here comfort and a home." In truth, I think God made us what we are as a nation, that these might have a place to which they could come. But while they here find a comfort and a home, it is a solemn duty that we owe to ourselves and our children, to let them know from the hour of their coming, that there must be no improper interference on their parts with our comforts and our homes. They are not to take our country out of our hands, and tell us, as some of them have done, that if we do not like the arrangement we can leave our country. Now I know that the good, the orderly, the religious, the industrious, will not wish thus to interfere with our right. They will not be noisy politicians, brawling about a liberty which they do not understand, seeking only to procure offices which they know not how to fill, insulting the Christian feelings of those who differ from them, and, in short, somewhat unceremoniously denying our right to the enjoyment of our own country and laws and usages, even though they have cost both our fathers and ourselves some treasure and some blood. Let our laws be such as will protect the worthy emigrant of all lands, and secure to him the fruits of his honest industry; but let them also put in his proper place him who has no proper sense of the kindness shown him in affording him a refuge and a home. And, above all things, in God's name and for the sake of our dear country, put men in power who are honest enough and courageous enough to execute those laws. The exclusion of emigrants then, either in whole or in part, is not the proper remedy.

We ask, then, what is the other and only remedy to which we have alluded? It is in moral and religious influence, and in nothing else. Christian patriots must work in this direction. You must enlighten the strangers as fast as you can. You must give them knowledge, secular and spiritual; and here the American patriot, who unhappily is but a Christian in name, may perceive the force of a principle, which you who worship here habitually, will remember to have heard from me more than once, for it is a vital principal: it is this—Governments are more dependent upon, and more indebted to Christianity, than Christianity is to them. Man makes forms of governments, but God made Christianity. Man's work, at best, is tainted with human fallibility, and man may alter or destroy it; but God is *unchangeable*, and, therefore, Christianity is an eternal, practical truth. It will live in freshness and beauty when human governments are all gone.

And in this work of enlightenment you must work chiefly among the young, for they are impressible—the old are petrified. The children are to be among the future men and women of the country. But in the instruction you impart, forget not that education for eternity is more important than education for time. Cherish your public schools, but banish not the Bible from them; but your Sunday-schools and churches must go hand in hand with your public schools. The physical, the intellectual, and the moral part of our nature, must all be alike under training. To teach the heart is more important than to teach the head only. The first will give a safe direction to the last; but the last alone gives no holy and blessed influence to the first. For good or for evil, then, children must grow up among us; for good or for evil, they must be among the men and the women who are to shape the future of this Republic. *What shall that future be?* Ah! I have asked a question of solemn interest to the American patriot. What shall the future of this blessed Union of now confederated States be? The times, the times, my dear countrymen, surround this question with an awful interest. God only can answer it, for to God only is the future a part of the ever present now on which he looks perpetually; known unto him only are all his works from the beginning. But I have loved to think that our dear country was made for high, and, as yet, unfulfilled destinies. I have loved to think that in the gradual unrolling of the mighty scroll on which God has inscribed the story of the future, (for it is God who makes all history,) men should read in long succession, as fold after fold was spread before the nations, emblazoned in letters of living light: “‘This,’ and ‘this,’ and ‘this,’ and ‘this,’ is the work which my providence has allotted to America for performance.” I have loved to think it was ours to rear high the beacon light, and keep bright the flashing blaze, within the illumination of whose golden glow would hover, high poised, that all the earth might look upon her queen-like majesty, the Genius of rational enlightened Freedom. I have loved to think that it was our glorious destiny to prove that God would be most truly and devoutly worshiped where no force was put upon the conscience; that man was best governed, where he was enlightened to understand, and permitted to assist in making the laws which govern him. I have loved to think that in the mighty coming conflict among the nationalities of this world, on which none but a fool can shut his eyes, between the giant, antagonistic powers of earthly absolutism on the one hand, and human freedom on the other, that it would be ours to stand in the van, the great embodied exponent and representative to the world of the blessing to humanity, of liberty; liberty under law—liberty under law made by ourselves. I have loved to think that in the struggles made by our crushed brethren of our common humanity in other lands, to rise to a higher, better being

than a state of serfdom, they would gather encouragement from our example, instruction from our doings, light from our illumination, and courage as there fell upon their ears the distant cry of our sentinels upon the lofty citadel of our freedom: "All's well—for God, for our Country, and for Liberty." I have loved to think of the magnificent development of our country, linked together by holy ties of brotherhood, united in enduring bonds of interest, stretching from polar ice to tropical verdure, spanning from ocean to ocean; too strong to be aggressive, too magnanimous to hurt the weak, just to all, and standing with proud and quiet self-respect in the consciousness of a gigantic strength which all nations shall feel it to be wisdom not to insult or provoke. These are the visions which have risen up before me of the grandeur of my country's future. And I have loved, too, to dwell upon a picture of softer, gentler features, yet part and parcel of the whole. I have mused over its beautiful touches, as they successively arose to the mind's eye, in the thousands, nay millions of spots in our blessed land, consecrated by the virtues of our people to the hallowed enjoyments of happy, domestic life. With our men, industrious, brave, and honest, our women, virtuous and affectionate, our children, learning their duty to God, their country and themselves, there arise up to the imagination thousands upon thousands of spots, villages, hamlets, towns, cities; and, in all, there are the spires of the churches pointing upward to God, and there are the school-houses for the happy children who make the very air laugh with them, as they ring out their tiny shouts of merriment in the gambols of their play-time; and there are the innumerable domestic hearthstones, where the mother, with matronly care, gathers her precious brood around her in the frosty coldness of the winter's night, while the sparkling fire, as it crackles and blazes, illuminates the group of happy children's faces, making them feel what a blessed world of comfort is in that dear word, home, and the father, his day's toil over, sits by, delighted to be one and mingle in the sports of that childish circle, where none need want for food or raiment, so bounteously, so benevolently, has a good God blessed the land we live in, giving an ample return to honest industry. Ah! this is the school for the heart—the alphabet is made up of the affections, and the moral of all the lessons is love, nothing but love.

What blessed pictures of a happy people are such as these; and your own hearts, I know will readily supply you with thousands far better than these poor sketches of mine.

But perchance you will say to me, "If a man hath a dream, let him tell it as a dream." Is this, then, all a dream? Under God, it depends upon Americans to say—ay, upon the wise and good of all parties in these United States. It need not be a dream; but a dream it will surely prove if we be recreant to our duty.

Each one of us has a specific obligation to fulfill. Let no one say, "It is so little I can do, that my efforts are unimportant." Not so; when God would show his power most signally, he does it by producing great effects from little causes. Our duty is plain; let each resolve on its performance. And need you help in that performance? Ah! yes; and now I bring Christ before you. You can not perform this or any other duty without him; you must not forget that patriotism is a Christian duty. You need Christian principles and Christian strength to perform it steadily and consistently. It may cost you at times some sacrifice of opinion, some expenditure of means, some surrender of prejudice; and how are you going, on principle, to meet such requirements, unless Christianity overcomes the selfishness of your nature and strengthens you to feel that in doing your duty to your country, you are performing a part of your duty to him? Has he not furnished us with his own example in this particular of love of country, and of the duty of making efforts to advance its true interest? As he foresaw the approaching fate of his own loved yet doomed Jerusalem, and the scattering of his countrymen, did he not weep and exclaim, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem!" Did he not declare that in his efforts to save his country, he would often have gathered her children together as a hen gathered her brood under her wings? Love of country, then, is consecrated by the example of our Lord and Master himself. But even were it not so, Christianity would have a claim on every one who exults, as you do, in freedom; for all the political freedom man possesses is derived from Christianity. You should value it, then, even on the inferior ground of its agency in promoting your temporal happiness. But there is a nobler, loftier freedom still than that which is merely political, and this, too, it offers to your acceptance; it is freedom from the dominion of sin—freedom from the just punishment of God's violated law—freedom from the tyranny of unbridled passions—freedom from the cowardly bondage of fear—freedom which lifts you upward into a region of light and truth—freedom which assimilates you more and more to God himself—freedom, in short, which through Christ brings you at last into heaven—no more a stranger and a foreigner, but a fellow-citizen with the saints and of the household of God. "If the truth shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed."

This is the freedom which animates the soul and nerves the arm of the Christian patriot; this it is which bids him love and serve his country, because therein he is serving God; this is the perennial spring which alone can keep ever full the fountain of Christian loyalty to his country, in the American patriot.

